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The Bureau of Land Management Service Center Newsletter November 1994

CENTER SCENE

Branch of Engineering Completes National Fire Headquarters

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho has a new modern Headquarters building, thanks in part to the Service Center's Branch of Engineering, which managed the design contract. The 56,000-square-foot facility, completed in April, was designed by Lombard-Conrad Architects of Boise and constructed at a cost of $5 million by Sundance Construction Company of Boise.

"Sundance and Lombard-Conrad were all very cooperative and the project was finished on time" according to Aileen China, Contracting Officer.

Ernie Parrott, lead architect for the BLM design team, conducted the final inspection of the building. "NIFC commented how beautiful the building is and they are impressed with it," he said.

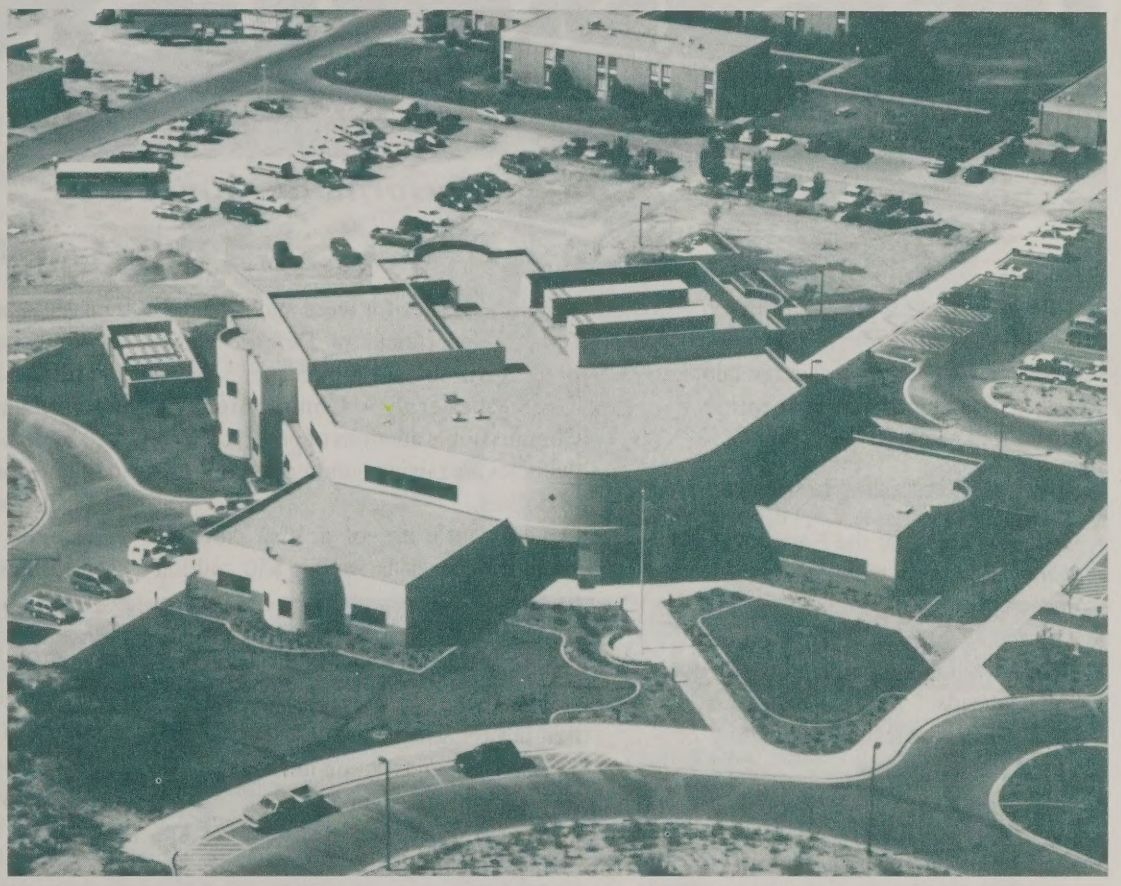

photo: Trana Glenn

NIFC, established in 1965, is the nation's logistical support center for wildfire suppression and fire management. It is the best example of true interagency cooperation to accomplish a common mission. The five major federal land and resource management agencies, along with the National Weather Service, provide a cost-effective service to respond to wildfire and other emergencies.

As the host agency at NIFC, the Bureau of Land Management plays a major role in the center's mission and is the primary occupant of the newly opened building. The Headquarters is also occupied by the USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In addition, the new building houses the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC), one of the many operations at NIFC. The NICC provides logistical support and intelligence reporting to all wildland management agencies. As local and regional resources are exhausted during fire emergencies and other disasters, NICC dispatches crews, overhead personnel, aircraft, supplies and other services across the United States and Canada, and to other foreign countries based upon embassy requests. The NICC staff also gathers, analyzes, and reports information to all agencies about specific incidents.

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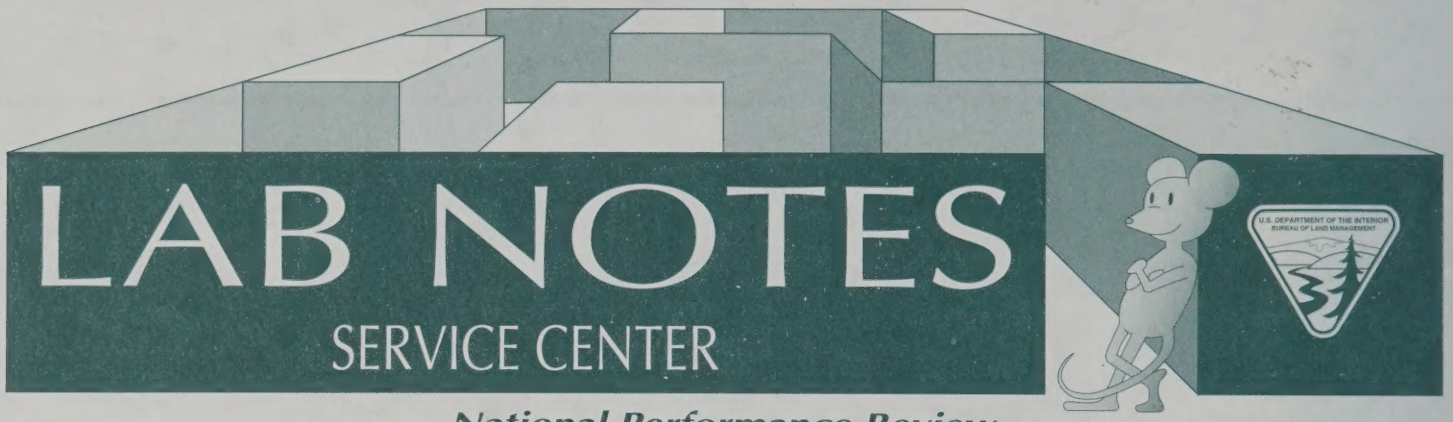


National Performance Review

• ACCOMPLISHMENTS •

One year ago, President Clinton and Vice President Gore promised the American people a government that ran better at less cost. The Federal Government is delivering on that promise.

Government is starting to work better:

- Over 90 percent of the National Performance Review's recommendations are underway.
- The President has signed 22 directives and performance agreements with seven agency heads.
- Over 100 agencies are publishing customer service standards.
- Nine agencies have started major streamlining initiatives.
- Agencies are forming labor-management partnerships with their unions.
- Agencies are slashing red tape.
- The government is buying fewer "designer" products and doing more common-sense commercial buying.
- 135 reinvention labs across the country are fostering innovation.
- The government is shifting billions of dollars in benefits to electronic payment.
- The Federal Government is changing the way it interacts with state and local governments to be more flexible and results-driven.

Government is starting to cost less:

- Approximately $47 billion of NPR's $108 billion in proposed savings is already enacted.
- $16 billion in savings is pending before Congress.
- Federal employment has dropped 71,000.
- $695 million is being saved by ending federal subsidies for wool and mohair.
- A new Department of Defense travel process will save $1 billion over 5 years.
- The Federal Communication Commission's auctions of new radio frequencies are raising hundreds of millions of dollars.
- Government's use of a Visa card for small purchases is saving $50 million this year.

Congress is doing its part:

- Congress has enacted more than $46 billion in savings.
- 21 bills with reinvention initiatives have been passed and signed, e.g.
  - Federal Workforce Restructuring Act (buyout authority)
  - Modernizing the Customs Service
  - Ending wool and mohair subsidies
  - Setting Education Goals—Goals 2000: Educate America Act
- 52 percent of the National Performance Review's recommendations requiring congressional action have been signed, introduced, or passed in one house.
- Congress has passed legislation to give states and localities greater flexibility for school to work, immunization, family support and education programs.

Teams of federal employees are leading the way:

- 33 teams with hundreds of federal employees have received the Vice President's Hammer Award for their work in reinvention.
- A Veterans Affairs team in New York has streamlined how benefits are given to veterans, cutting 25 steps to 8, and waiting time to see a counselor from 30 minutes to 3.
- A Miami Customs Service team has reinvented operations, set a 5-minute standard for clearing passengers and established a 24-hour service for perishable cargo.
- Businesses wanting export assistance can get one-stop shopping for the services of 19 federal agencies in Baltimore, Miami, Chicago and Long Beach thanks to the efforts of a cross-agency team.
- A Texas Small Business Administration team has slashed paperwork requirements for certain loans—to a single one-page form.
- An Atlanta team has developed a single 8-page application for benefits from 6 federal programs—replacing 64 pages of paperwork.
- A Seattle team has created one stop re-employment services for displaced aircraft industry employees and simplified federal/state procedures and paperwork.
- And many, many more.

There is lots more to do:

- Streamline federal agencies.
- Conduct serious reengineering of work processes.
- Improve customer service to Americans.
- Give all federal employees the skills they need to reinvent government and serve customers.
- Reform the civil service system.
- Shift the focus of government to achieving results rather than controlling inputs.

Conferences Encourage Math & Science for Girls

In 1976 the Math/Science Network created Expanding Your Horizons in Science and Mathematics (EYH) Conferences as an intervention strategy, designed to nurture girls' interest in mathematics and science courses. The conferences encouraged them to expand their career visions to included science and mathematics-based careers.

Since the first conference was held at Mills College, Oakland, California in 1976, more than 300,000 sixth through twelfth grade young women and approximately 40,000 parents and educators have attended EYH Conferences. In the 1993-1994 year there were 125 individual conferences (registered with the Math/Science Network) held in 31 states, reaching approximately 45,000 students.

Each EYH conferences is unique, because it is designed at the local level by the women in that community, to meet the needs of their students, using the resources to which they have access.

Young dancers perform at a recent Hispanic Heritage celebration at the Service Center.

Local Conference Held at Red Rocks

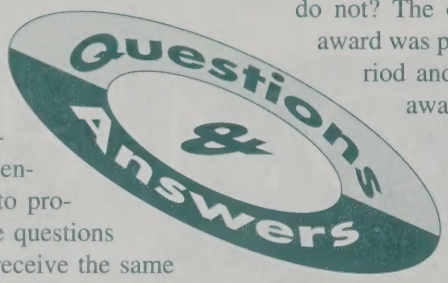
The Red Rocks Community College EYH Conference was held on Saturday, October 29 at the Red Rocks Campus. This gave many young women their first experience on a college campus, letting them imagine themselves there for higher education. Last year's attendance at the Red Rocks EYH Conference was approximately 200 students and 100 adults.

The keynote speaker encouraged the young women to explore new career ideas, understand the importance of non-traditional careers, and keep their options open. The students attended two hands-on workshops, where career women in non-traditional fields worked with them on a project, experiment, or activity. During the workshops, the women served as role models, sharing information about themselves, careers, lifestyles, and work/family issues. This included information on necessary training for particular careers, the best and worst parts of the careers, and descriptions of a typical day on the job.

The conference included a special session for parents and educators to provide them with the information they need to better foster and support young women's interest in mathematics and science. The adults were made aware of the factors that push young women away from non-traditional careers. A showing and discussion was held on the film "Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes", recently shown at BLM's Diversity Training. Information was presented on access to and funding for higher education, private sector scholarships, tax-saving ways to save for college, and how to get into college.

Service Center Director Larry Bembry speaks to a group of visiting college students as part of the Historic Black Colleges and Universities program.

Questions & Answers



Periodically, the Center Scene Editor receives questions regarding policies, procedures, and/or processes at the Service Center. We are delighted to provide responses to these questions so that all employees receive the same answers. A question which was recently asked is:

QUESTION: Could you explain something?:

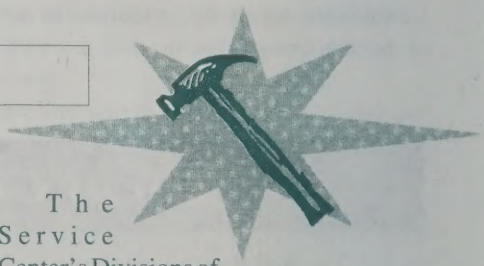
1) The PIPR Performance Awards, how are they determined?
2) Why do some people get awards and other people with the exact same rating do not? The one that didn't get an award was promoted during the period and therefore receives no award. Why is that?

ANSWER: This is a commonly asked question, particularly around performance appraisal time. Often times, the response is not what the person making the inquiry would like to hear. However, in administering the awards program as it relates to performance appraisal, the Division of Personnel is required to adhere to the regulation.

The performance appraisal system allows for awards to be given to employees who receive Level 4 and Level 5 Ratings. The Service Center and the Office of IRM/ Modernization's policy is that a monetary award must be given to an employee who receives a Level 5 rating. For those employees receiving a Level 4 rating, awards are discretionary.

There is an exception to this rule for both Level 5 and Level 4 ratings, where the supervisor would like to award the employee. The exception is, if the employee received a promotion within the last six months or if he/she is eligible to be promoted to the full performance level of his/ her position, then he/she would not qualify for a monetary award. The rationale for this policy is that a promotion is considered to be the highest form of recognition.

The HAMMER Award



The Hammer Award is a special award given by the Vice President to people - usually but not always federal employees - who have participated in a team effort that has contributed dramatically to improving the way government works. It recognizes special achievements in at least one of the four main themes of reinventing government: improving customer service, eliminating red tape, empowering employees, and getting back to basics.

The hammer is not like the old government hammers. It costs less than $6, plus a few cents worth of ribbon, a few bucks for wood and paint, and a 10-cent card from the Vice President. It is symbolic of the way we are going to build a new government that works better and costs less.

The Service Center's Divisions of Financial Systems and Information Resource Management were among 28 teams nominated from Colorado for the award and honored at a recent NPR ceremony, "Celebrating Heroes of Reinvention."

Director Larry Bembry, on behalf of the Service Center, accepts an NPR Heroes of Reinvention Certificate, along with representatives of other recognized agencies. BLM Colorado State Director and Denver Federal Executive Board Chairperson Bob Moore is third from left and Office of Personnel Management Director Jim King is far right.

Good work in the Division of Administrative Services

Marty Coffey, SC-651B, and Richard Banks, SC-651B, both received on-the-spot awards. Marty's was recognized for her performance of duties in awarding the Wild Horse and Burro Program and State of Alaska Cadastral Survey 638 contracts. Richard was recognized for providing immediate assistance in the preparation of a recent protest. The work of both employees was accomplished in addition to performing regularly assigned duties within deadlines and with minimal supervision.